

EN 311Q - Literature of the Sixties – Spring 2009

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Course Objective: This course is designed to help you refine your competencies in critical thinking and communication; to further your understanding of this significant period in American culture and how it applies to contemporary literary, social and political circumstances; and to encourage you to question--along with the authors studied--the values and assumptions that guide our conduct. All of these objectives assume your desire and power to help shape and effect a just and peaceful society. Emphasis will be put on your ability to:

- read and listen with care and insight
- analyze literature structurally and thematically
- locate, select, and integrate a variety of appropriate research sources
- discuss ideas and topics critically and respectfully in small and large groups
- communicate in writing your own carefully formulated and clearly articulated thoughts.

This tentative syllabus reflects the subject of each day's discussion: all reading assignments, including novels, are therefore to be completed **before** they appear on the syllabus. Except for the two novels, all readings are on ON-LINE. Find EN311Q on my web page, via English department faculty. You are required to print out or copy the readings, and to mark significant passages as you read. Of course, always bring your marked texts to class on the appropriate day.

- T. 1/13: Guidelines and expectations: read the complete syllabus and bring questions to Thursday's class.
Get started on Kesey (it's a long novel, and the critical paper will require a close reading.)
- Th. 1/15: Lecture: backgrounds. Anyone who misses Tuesday and today will be dropped from the class.
- T. 1/20: The Beats: Kerouac: intro, On the Road excerpt, "Essentials..." & "Belief and Technique..."; Ginsberg intro, "Howl." Expect a quiz.
- Th. 1/22: Ginsberg, cont. Alienation & protest in 60s popular music. (no new reading: work on finishing Kesey)
- T. 1/27: Kesey: *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Conventions of critical writing, formulating your thesis
- Th. 1/29: Kesey: *Cuckoo's Nest*: Writing workshop: **bring 2 copies of your intro paragraph**
- T. 2/3: Kesey: *Cuckoo's Nest*: Papers due at beginning of period. No additional reading.
- Th. 2/5: Civil Rights: Lecture. Anthology: "Liars Don't Qualify" and "Neighbors".
- T. 2/10: Civil Rights anthology, cont.: everything else.
- Th. 2/12: Vietnam and the anti-war movement: lecture. Vietnam anthology: all the poetry
- T. 2/17: Vietnam anthology: "American Atrocity" and "Biggest Thing Since Custer". Come prepared to discuss comparisons with contemporary events. Have you signed up for your Project topic yet?
- Th. 2/19: Vietnam, cont.: bring marked texts; no additional reading. Ask about extra credit option for Tuesday!
- T. 2/24: The Vietnam conflict (over there and at home) in rock music. Handout on Vonnegut seminar topics.
Last day to sign up for Project/Presentation topics without penalty.
- Th. 2/26: **Midterm.** Also—Simplify life: start Culture Shocks & *Slaughterhouse Five* now & finish over break.
- T. 3/10: Culture Shocks anthology: everything
- Th. 3/12: Culture Shocks, cont.
- T. 3/17: Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse Five*. Objective Test.
- Th. 3/19: Vonnegut: seminar presentations
- T. 3/24: Vonnegut: seminar presentations
- Th. 3/26: Revolution anthology: "Harlem Transfer" and "My Man Bovanne"
- T. 3/31: Revolution, cont.: everything else
- Th. 4/2: **Project presentations**
- T. 4/7: The Counterculture anthology (everything). Lecture. **LAST DAY TO TURN IN YOUR LAST PAPER!**
- Th. 4/9: **Project presentations**
- T. 4/14: The Counterculture, cont. (no additional reading)
- Th. 4/16: **Project presentations**
- T. 4/21: **Project presentations**
- Th. 4/23: Catch-up day
- FINAL: RU01 (1:45) - 1:15 Tuesday, April 28 RU02 (10:50) – 1:15 Thursday, April 30

GENERAL GUIDELINES

GRADES: Your semester grade will consist of the following elements:

1. Cumulative grade for daily assignments. (Most classes will begin with a quiz or short written response.)
2. Objective test on Vonnegut, and midterm exam
3. Your best critical (textual analysis) or research paper (this could be your Kesey paper)
4. Your best Personal Choice paper, or your next-best critical (textual analysis) or research paper
5. Attendance/Participation
6. Project, and Presentation based on project: Project includes scope, academic depth, substance of research, and bibliography in correct MLA form. Presentation includes substance, organization, clarity and interest of presentation; thesis statement and sustained critical focus; and detailed outline to show organizational plan.
7. Final Exam

*Failure to submit a daily assignment will result in a 0 (Zero) which counts as two Fs.

*You cannot pass the class without earning passing grades on two papers, research project, and presentation.

BONUS OFFER: Your project and presentation are worth a total of three grades: the final exam will be optional for those earning all three grades of at least a B.

DAILY WORK: Quizzes and in-class written responses missed because of absence usually cannot be made up. Because many of us have legitimate reasons for missing one or two classes during the semester, or for coming to class unprepared once or twice, I will drop your lowest daily grade, even if it's a zero (worth 2 F's). Most assignments can be made up *before* an absence, if you are able to plan ahead.

PAPERS:

Critical and/or research: You may write as many critical and research papers as you wish, according to the attached composition guidelines. Critical papers respond analytically to one or more of the assigned readings. Research papers examine in depth some issue relevant to the Sixties (not necessarily literary). In all cases, papers require a **sharply defined thesis** that takes a clear critical position: every word of the paper will be an explicit development and support of that position. Separate grades will be assigned for content (the significance of what you say) and form (the grace and clarity with which it is expressed). Your grades will be based on your compliance with the composition guidelines on the last page of this syllabus. To take the fear out of stretching your skill level, only your best critical paper (the one with the highest grades) will be calculated into your semester grade.

Personal Choice: These may be personal essays relating to class topics, comparisons of 60s issues with contemporary issues, even relevant creative writing projects—it's your choice. Use your strengths. You will get two grades: usually, one will be for content, and the other for form, but the nature of your paper may suggest a better approach. Again, you may write as many as you wish, and only your best paper will count toward your final grade. Additional critical or research paper(s) may be substituted for your Personal Choice paper(s).

Your first paper, on *Cuckoo's Nest*, is due February 5; you may turn in papers at any time after that, through April 9. Papers may be turned in up to one week after these two dates at the expense of one letter grade on both form and content. If you do not turn in your Kesey paper by February 12, you should withdraw from the class to avoid failure. If you think special circumstances warrant an extension, make arrangements with me before the due date: extensions are not given on the due date unless your book-bag spontaneously combusts on your way to class.

Rewrites are entirely optional: I will read and respond to them with care, but they will not count toward your semester grade. This policy is meant to encourage careful editing and revision of your own work. I am happy to help with drafts, of course, and only your best papers will count toward your semester grade.

PROJECT/ PRESENTATION: Everyone is required to do a research project, and a presentation based on that research. The combined grades for the project and presentation are worth more than anything else you do for this class, so choose your topic early and begin working toward your A (an added bonus is that you may substitute good project/presentation grades for your final exam grade)! You may build on work already done in this or in other classes, but you may not recycle work.

I expect to see a **minimum** of 30 hours' work in your project/ presentation, with full documentation of all print and non-print sources. Depending on your topic, I'll look for a dozen or more solid entries in your bibliography, of both print and non-print sources. Try to locate at least half of your sources from academic databases and university press books. If this turns out to be a problem, come see me and we'll work it out in your best interests.

In general, each person's presentation will be approximately 10-12 minutes long. Presentation length may vary from the norm: if three people collaborate on a video, for example, the video doesn't have to be a half hour long. Others may find they need more than 12 minutes—to compare clips of covered rock music, for example. It is your responsibility to accurately commit yourself to a time frame when you sign up, so that I can schedule successfully.

It's your responsibility as well to arrange for equipment that's not normally in the classroom: tech cart, boom box, etc. Familiarize yourself with equipment before class, because the clock necessarily starts running as soon as your turn begins.

On the day of your presentation, before class, you will give me these two things:

1. a full outline of your presentation that a) begins with your thesis statement and b) includes parenthetical citations of all your sources where you used them, and
2. a complete bibliography in proper MLA format.

As long as your project is rooted in issues related to the 60s, you have complete latitude in your choice of topic and presentation. It can be tailored to accommodate an incredibly wide range of individual interests. You are encouraged to exercise your creativity and initiative. Collaborative projects/presentations and other innovative approaches are enthusiastically encouraged. All projects require my prior approval.

Project Ideas

Perhaps you'd like to do an in-depth critical examination of a novel, novelist, or poet of the 60's. In this case, your research would be primarily critical essays from books and scholarly journals. Here are some authors and suggested titles to get you started:

Baldwin, James: *Another Country*

Barthelme, Donald: *Snow White*

Bellow, Saul: *Henderson the Rain King*

.Brown, Rita Mae: *Rubyfruit Jungle*

Heller, Joseph: *Catch 22*

Mailer, Norman: *Armies of the Night*

Roth, Philip: *Portnoy's Complaint*

Stone, Robert: *A Hall of Mirrors*

Styron, William: *The Confessions of Nat Turner*

Wolfe, Tom: *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*

Vonnegut, Kurt: *Cat's Cradle*

Some Major Poets: Robt. Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Gary Snyder, Ann Sexton, Adrienne Rich, Bob Dylan, Marge Piercy

Maybe you'd rather design a non-literary topic. In this case, make sure your research relies on essays from scholarly journals found in academic databases, rather than just popular culture sources like the Web. If appropriate, include both print and non-print sources. Here are a few possibilities to give you some ideas:

The outlaw as hero in 60's films (Butch Cassidy..., Bonnie and Clyde, Easy Rider, etc.)

The role of the university in social protest—Berkeley Free Speech Mvmt, SDS, Kent State massacre, etc.

“The Pill” and the sexual revolution, changes in the definitions of family, etc.

60s fashions as political statements, corporate co-opting of counterculture fashions, etc.

Cultural influence of The Beatles, the emergence of Acid Rock in San Francisco, etc.

Delano Grape Strikes and the rise of the Mexican-American Civil Rights Movement

Native-American standoff at Wounded Knee and Alcatraz

FBI infiltration and subversion of the anti-war movement, CIA involvement in Vietnam drug smuggling, etc.

The rise and fall of the Black Panthers, disaffection from non-violent strategies of MLK, etc.

Woodstock and the cultural ideals of “Woodstock Nation”; Haight-Ashbury, etc.

Political cartoons in newspapers; underground comix (R. Crumb); advertising strategies, etc.

Popularization of the arts (Andy Warhol, for ex.), Formation of National Endowments for art & lit., etc.

Highlights in the sports world, and their social significance.

How Vietnam changed Hollywood's portrayals of war, from then to now.

Chicano literature as political tool (“*actos*”, for example), rise of the Chicano “*movimiento*,” etc.

Freedom Summer, including the murders of Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman
The JFK-assassination conspiracy theories; MLK-assassination conspiracy theories, etc
60s nostalgia in contemporary TV/movies, The roles of women or minorities in 60s sit-coms, etc.
The emergence of the Ecology movement, gay rights, feminism, etc. "Identity politics."

EXTRA CREDIT: Everyone is invited to submit a 2-page analysis (NOT plot summary) of a feature-length film that (1) was produced during the 60s and reflects 60s culture (ex. *Dr. Strangelove*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *Fail Safe*,) (2) is based on events of the 60s (*Mississippi Burning*, *Apocalypse Now*, *I Shot Andy Warhol*), or (3) is based on a novel written in the 60s (*Catch 22*, etc., but not *Cuckoo's Nest* or *Slaughterhouse Five*, unless you do a comparison with the novel). This two-page analysis must earn at least a B to be eligible to use as extra credit. This grade can be used to replace one quiz grade or to erase one absence. Extra credit analyses will be accepted until April 2.

ATTENDANCE: Because much of the course content comes from lecture and class activity rather than assigned reading, and because this is primarily a discussion class, attendance and active participation are expected. Five absences will result in your semester grade being lowered by one full letter grade, and six absences (three weeks of class) will result in an F for the semester. On the other hand, I reward good attendance and participation with a separate grade, worth as much as a critical paper, as follows: 0 absences = A+, 1 = A, 2 = A-, 3 = B, 4 = C, 5 = D.

Remember that absences can hurt you three times: once for attendance/participation grade, and twice for a missed in-class assignment (work not submitted earns a zero, which counts as two Fs). But this grade can really help you, too, and has in many, many cases boosted someone's final grade!

PLAGIARISM: Anyone found to have submitted plagiarized work will be dropped from the class. If it is too late to withdraw, the student will be given an F for the semester. I'll also notify your advisor and all of your current professors. Really. The class is set up to give you unlimited do-overs on your papers without penalty, and laziness is a sorry excuse for lying and cheating..

If you run into trouble with any aspect of your project or papers, please let me and/or one of the writing consultants help you. I want you to succeed, and I want you to know that you're entirely capable of success.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: If you have a learning disability that I should be aware of, please visit me during office hours with the proper documentation, as soon as you can. Thanks!

OFFICE HOURS: My office is in Carroll Hall 107, phone is 303.458.4226, and e-mail is jstclair@regis.edu. Office hours are Tuesdays 9:25 – 10:40, Wednesdays 12:15 -2:30, Thursday 12:15 – 1:30, and by appointment. I am rarely on campus on Mondays. **Your visits are always welcome:** Please let me know how I can help you.

If you call and leave a message, please say your name and telephone number slowly and distinctly, as I do not hear very well. (Sometimes, to my great chagrin, I have been unable to return calls because I couldn't understand the name and/or number.)

I look forward to working with you this semester

Composition Guidelines

FINALLY--Use these Composition Guidelines to improve your grade on your critical and/or research papers. This format is certainly not the only way to organize and develop an academic paper. It is, however, a particularly good form to know because it makes it practically impossible to get off track or confuse your reader. It is applicable or adaptable to a great many (most?) of the writing assignments you will have both in college and in your future

professional life because it emphasizes focus, clarity, and logical development. Accommodating your papers to this format is therefore part of your critical/ research writing requirements for this class.

1. A clear, precisely defined, and insightful THESIS STATEMENT that identifies the author and text (for textual analysis) and tells the reader in one sentence the critical position that your paper will develop and support. (Ask yourself, "What is the PURPOSE of this paper? Exactly what am I setting out to prove?") For this class, make this the first sentence of the paper.
2. An adequately developed INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH that explains specifically how the topic will be examined. For our purposes, no funnel introductions, no generalizations, and no vague "teasers": your introduction must give your reader a solid and specific understanding of the scope and direction of your discussion.
3. A logical and easy-to-follow ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN. Your introduction will set this up; your topic sentences will keep your reader on course.
4. A clear TOPIC SENTENCE for each paragraph that does these two jobs: a) expresses the idea developed in that paragraph and b) relates the central claim of the paragraph to overall thesis development. For this class, make this the first sentence of each paragraph.
5. PARAGRAPHS that adequately develop and support their topic sentences, and never deviate from precise development of topic sentence and thesis. No plot summary, no vague support, no generalizations--only solid textual proof of your thesis.
6. Smoothly integrated and correctly punctuated SUPPORTIVE QUOTATIONS with full and correct documentation.
7. SENTENCES that are grammatically correct, succinct, gracefully constructed, and logically interconnected. Complex ideas require simple expression: unnecessarily big words and convoluted structures are for amateurs.
8. A CONCLUSION that unifies and encapsulates the various points of your argument/critical position. Don't bring new points into the conclusion, because these guidelines require that you develop and support all your claims.
9. An OVERALL PAPER that presents a clear, unified, and coherent position that conforms to the requirements of the assignment (no merely "informational" highschool-type research papers, for example). Every word must be a development of your thesis. In critical writing, every word must relate specifically to your text or argument (no broad claims or generalizations).
10. ORIGINALITY of thought and evidence of scholarly INSIGHT.

The function of formal writing is to communicate your ideas clearly to someone else. For this reason, I am very strict on organization (unity and coherence) and support (proving the validity of your thesis). Because it is also important neither to waste your reader's time nor to dilute the power of what you have to say, I am also hard on redundancy, wordiness, and vagueness: be concise and precise. Be sure to proofread, and try to get someone else to read your paper before you submit it for a grade. See me or a writing consultant for substantive help on your papers; work with a writing consultant on cosmetics and proofreading. **When you visit the writing center for help, be sure to show them these composition guidelines** so they understand the expectations.